

Cloud Storage Company Saves Money and Increases Collaboration

Customer Case Study



Coraid opts for Cisco WebEx cloud services to drive competitive edge, using high-quality video collaboration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Coraid
Industry: Technology
Location: Athens, Georgia and Redwood City, California
Number of Employees: 170

Challenge:

- Improve collaboration and communication between global offices, remote employees, and business contacts
- Implement cost-effective, cloud-based videoconferencing solution
- Help enable high-touch virtual meetings for more efficient product development

Solution:

- Cisco WebEx Cloud delivers economical and easy-to-use “in-person” video collaboration
- Cisco TelePresence Quick Set C20, Cisco TelePresence EX Series, and Cisco Jabber Video for TelePresence deliver cloud-based videoconferencing to onsite and remote employees
- Cisco WebEx Meetings enhance product development work streams between engineering and sales teams by combining web conferencing with file and presentation sharing

Results:

- Enhanced company culture and productivity
- Provides collaboration with customers and partners, helping the company be more agile and responsive
- Increased usage and satisfaction among users since switching to Cisco collaboration solutions

Challenge

Incorporated in 2000, Coraid is a cloud storage company that provides enterprises of all sizes with flexible, high-performance Ethernet SAN solutions. Today, Coraid is a fast-growing global operation, with over 1600 customers and 170 employees worldwide. Its rapid expansion has led to a tenfold increase in both revenue and staff in just the last two years.

The company helps maintain its success by focusing on core competencies rather than staffing a large internal IT department. “We made the conscious decision not to invest in IT people, equipment, and data centers,” says Doug Dooley, vice president of product management. “Instead, we have one IT person on staff, and we use cloud-based solutions that provide us with the speed, performance, price, and agility we need.”

Coraid has core R&D and support centers in Athens, Georgia and Redwood City, California, along with staff in Australia and the United Kingdom. The company believes in hiring the best developers, regardless of location, so they also have senior engineers in very remote locations. This approach has created a need to provide high-quality collaboration across geographic boundaries via videoconferencing. “As a fast-growing company, we need to maintain a highly collaborative, connected culture,” says Yuri Kolesnikov, Coraid’s director of IT. “Video is especially important for our engineers, because they need to mimic in-person meetings where they can share drawings, presentations, and such.”

Coraid initially used a simple voice over IP (VoIP) solution for remote collaboration, but soon realized that approach compromised both audio quality and the ability to conference in multiple sites with video. “We couldn’t achieve a high-quality collaborative environment with just your average VoIP tool,” says Carl Wright, Coraid’s executive vice president of worldwide sales.



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Vice President of Product Management
Coraid

“As a high tech, cutting-edge company, using a videoconferencing solution designed for casual consumers was embarrassing for us,” says Dooley. “The quality of connectivity was random, unpredictable, and not very good. And if we experienced technical difficulties, we didn’t have access to instant support. We obviously needed to step up our game.”

Solution

Coraid opted for Cisco WebEx® Cloud solutions, starting with Cisco WebEx Telepresence, a cost-effective, easy-to-use, cloud-based video collaboration service. “As a subscription-based service, this is a very good price-performance model for us and a great alternative to more expensive video solutions,” says Kolesnikov.

The company’s solution includes Cisco TelePresence® Quick Set C20 video systems for its conference rooms. “We now have high-definition technology that is much better than the average camera and microphone, with voice and video quality far superior to similar solutions on the market. That helps when we have a large group of 40 or so people in the room,” says Kolesnikov. Coraid also has the Cisco® TelePresence EX Series for onsite desktop users and Cisco Jabber™ Video application for its remote users.

“The soft client and end-points presented an economic value that made it an easy decision for us to move forward,” says Wright. “We didn’t need to acquire a lot of infrastructure for this. It was click and go.”

Kevin Brown, CEO of Coraid, says, “If we had to stop, slow down, and re-design the way our IT systems worked, or over-invest by 10 times the upfront costs, that would be a disaster. For us, the cloud has been a tremendous enabler of scale and speed.”

Coraid has also added Cisco WebEx Meetings to its collaboration portfolio to help product and sales teams stay coordinated as they innovate and deliver new products to their customers. “Our engineers can share screens and diagrams, and draw on white boards,” says Kolesnikov. “If they can collaborate more easily than before and deliver products faster, that definitely improves our competitiveness.”

Additionally, John Gilmartin, vice president of product marketing at Coraid, also highlights how important WebEx Meetings is to the company’s customer journey: “Communicating with prospects and customers is absolutely critical. We find online events like webinars and educational sessions around our products to be one of the most effective ways to get information to the marketplace.”

Results

The Cisco solution has significantly improved the productivity of Coraid’s development staff, which participates in as many as 25 video conferences daily, by connecting the Athens and Redwood City teams with each other and with remote engineers.

After only two months into the deployment, the Coraid team is already seeing a sharpened competitive edge with Cisco WebEx Telepresence. “Telepresence is upping our game and creating a higher caliber company with a competitive advantage,” says Dooley. “We’re faster, more agile, and smarter with our investments.”

Dooley also notes that Cisco WebEx Telepresence brings a more sophisticated video experience to Coraid that is essential when talking to external customers and partners “We were engaging Fortune 500 companies using free tools that weren’t quite baked, just didn’t make us look like the kind of company they wanted to partner with and have a strategic relationship with. And so we really wanted to graduate

out of what we were using before to a level that was truly professional. The Cisco WebEx and TelePresence offering really helped get us to that level.”

The solution has also helped unify a geographically dispersed company. During weekly all-hands meetings, Coraid executives share insights with staff across multiple time zones. Brown says, “The way we think about it is: these are two halves of the same room separated only by a screen and the Internet.” Wright adds, “These meetings are working out so well that we’re buying additional telepresence units.”

Coraid has seen a positive shift culturally as productivity and collaboration increase. The company has even started to use the solution for employee training, partner meetings, and more. “The face-to-face aspect of video gives a personal touch and reminds us that we’re all one team,” says Kolesnikov.

Next Steps

Because of Coraid’s initial success, Wright expects the company’s use of telepresence and Cisco collaboration technology to double in less than a year. Kolesnikov agrees, noting that he would like to see video-enabled technology on every desk. Plans call for equipping additional conference rooms and a soon-to-built executive briefing center with video equipment. “We’re looking at other Cisco portfolio offerings that integrate with our telepresence equipment,” says Wright. “We see this technology as key to the future success of Coraid.”

For More Information

- To find out more about Cisco WebEx Telepresence, go to: www.cisco.com/go/webextelepresence.
- To read other success stories, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/web/telepresence/webex-telepresence-smb/featured-customers.html>.

Product List

Collaboration Solutions

Telepresence

- Cisco TelePresence Endpoints
 - Cisco TelePresence Quick Set C20
 - Cisco TelePresence EX Series
- Cisco WebEx TelePresence

Collaboration Applications

- Cisco Jabber
 - Cisco Jabber Video for TelePresence (Jabber Video)
- Cisco WebEx Enterprise Edition
 - Cisco WebEx Meeting Center
 - Cisco WebEx Training Center
 - Cisco WebEx Event Center
 - Cisco WebEx Support Center
 - Cisco WebEx Connect



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